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Monday, December 17, 2018 metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhi

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DUMPED

How bad is illegal dumping in Philadelphia? The Water Department recently carted away 245 tons of waste from the banks of the Schuylkill — not far from drinking-water intakes. 4-5

PHILADELPHIA WATER DEPARTMENT

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5 THINGS TO KNOW

WELCOME TO METRO PHILLY

SAM NEWHOUSE, REPORTER

Historically, the Schuylkill River was once known for having "waters of uncommon quality." Heavily polluted in the early 20th century by upstream industry, by the 1950s the state had begun a cleanup and instituted new regulations that, over time, helped the ecosystem around the river that shapes Philadelphia begin to regenerate. This history makes it all the more offensive that the Water Department recently discovered a dumping site on the river's banks — with an estimated 245 tons of illegally dumped debris. ***Read how the city and volunteers cleaned it up on pages 4-5 and on metrophilly.us.***

1 NEW BREXIT VOTE WOULD 'BREAK FAITH,' SAYS MAY

Prime Minister Theresa May will state her opposition to a second Brexit referendum on Monday, telling parliament such a vote would "break faith" with British people and do "irreparable damage" to politics. With May facing deadlock in parliament over her deal to leave the European Union and the bloc offering little in the way of concessions to win lawmakers over, more politicians are calling for a second referendum to break the impasse. But May and her ministers have ruled out a new ballot, saying it would deepen already ugly divisions over Britain's biggest decision since World War II and betray voters who narrowly backed leaving the E.U. at a 2016 referendum. That increases the risk of Britain leaving without a deal in less than four months, a scenario some businesses fear would be catastrophic for the world's fifth-largest economy. "Let us not break faith with the British people by trying to stage another referendum," May will tell lawmakers, according to extracts of her speech released in advance.

2 CHINA GRANTS CONSULAR ACCESS TO DETAINEE

Canadian diplomats received consular access on Sunday to the second of two men detained by China over the past week, Canada's foreign ministry said in a statement that gave few details. John McCallum, Canada's ambassador to Beijing, met Michael Spavor, the statement said. Spavor and Michael Kovrig were both picked up after Canada arrested a senior Chinese executive on a U.S. extradition request. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau — who said on Friday the detentions were unacceptable — told CTV his government was taking the situation very seriously. "We have engaged with the Chinese officials to determine what exactly conditions are they being detained under? Why are they being detained?" he said in an interview aired on Sunday. McCallum met Kovrig for the first time on Friday. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Friday that China should free the two men. Spavor, a businessman, and Kovrig, a former diplomat, were detained after Canadian police arrested Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd.'s chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, on Dec. 1.

GETTY IMAGES

3 MORE THAN 40 HURT IN JAPAN BAR EXPLOSION

More than 40 people were injured in an explosion on Sunday at a bar in Sapporo in northern Japan, Kyodo news agency reported. There was no immediate word on the cause of the blast, which the agency said had caused a number of buildings to collapse. Kyodo said one person was in critical condition. Video of the incident posted on social media showed flames and dark smoke billowing into the night sky and people scrambling to safety beside a street strewn with debris and shattered glass. Police and firefighters worked to get the site under control, fighting flames and smoke. "I heard a bang which sounded like thunder, and my condo was shaken," a man who lives nearby was quoted assaying by the Japan Times. Eyewitnesses reported smelling gas in the area following the explosion, which Kyodo said happened at 8:30 p.m.

4 BRAZILIAN FAITH HEALER FACES RAPE CHARGES

A Brazilian faith healer accused of sexual abuse by more than 300 women has turned himself in a day after being officially ruled a fugitive, local news media reported on Sunday. João Teixeira de Faria, known as "John of God" and who became a celebrity when Oprah Winfrey broadcast a report on his healing methods in 2013, surrendered to authorities in a roadway in Abadiânia, several news outlets said. Since 1976, he has led a spiritual center in Abadiânia. Representatives for Faria and police could not be immediately reached for comment. A judge on Friday had issued an arrest warrant for Faria giving until 2 p.m. on Saturday to surrender. After he failed to report to authorities, Faria was officially ruled a fugitive. Faria drew thousands of Brazilians and foreigners to his spiritual center in Abadiânia. Faria denied the accusations on Thursday when he visited his center and spoke to a crowd of followers. His lawyer on Saturday said Faria would turn himself in and file an appeal on Monday. Faria, 76, could face charges of rape, with a prison sentence of 10 years if convicted.

5 VINE CO-FOUNDER COLIN KROLL FOUND DEAD

HQ Trivia and Vine co-founder Colin Kroll was found dead in his Manhattan apartment of an apparent drug overdose at the age of 35. According to the New York Post, Kroll's body was discovered by police early Sunday morning. An unnamed girlfriend of Kroll's called police after she couldn't get in touch with him and became concerned. The Post also reported that police and Kroll's girlfriend paid a visit to Kroll's home on Spring Street in SoHo where they found him unresponsive in the bedroom. According to the New York Daily News and other outlets, drug paraphernalia were found inside the apartment. Kroll was pronounced dead at the scene. Kroll was named CEO of HQ Trivia this past September following co-founder Rus Yusupov's move to the position of chief creative officer. He was previously employed at Twitter following the company's purchase of Vine. He was fired in 2014 reportedly due to a "hostile management style."

SARAH LUOMA

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Ridesharing platforms such as Uber and Lyft provide insurance coverage to both passengers and driver-partners who are injured in auto accidents. If you are a passenger or driver-partner injured during an Uber or Lyft ride, you may be eligible to receive compensation for your injuries through Uber/Lyft's insurance. These policies oftentimes provide for up to $1 million in benefits, and may also cover your medical expenses even if you do not have health insurance.

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3. *Driving For Personal Use / Not Logged Into the App:* the platform's insurance will not provide any coverage.

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Volunteers from United by Blue, along with Philadelphia Water Department and city staff, participate at a previous Schuylkill River cleanup.

COURTESY OF PHILLY WATER DEPARTMENT

245 tons of garbage removed from Schuylkill

After discovering an illegal "dumping site" in the Schuylkill, near two intake valves for drinking water, the city and volunteers cleaned up the site.

SAM NEWHOUSE
sam.newhouse@metro.us

The Schuylkill River has more than its fair share of trash. Over its 135-mile course, from near Pottsville through Reading to Philadelphia, the problem is not people throwing waste into the Schuylkill but litter from the populated areas along the river, which flows into the river due to precipitation and groundwater.

How bad is the problem? Well, during just four days of cleaning by Philadelphia Water Department officials and volunteers this autumn, at one small spot along the river taken over by illegal dumpers, a total of nearly 245 tons of waste was pulled out of the river — a quantity the Water Department described as "eye-popping."

"This was a pretty big one," said Maria Horowitz, an environmental engineer and watershed field services manager at the Water Department, who organized the cleanup. "This is the [dumping site] we found that's closest to a waterway."

The illegal short-dumping site was on a grassy area on the western side of the Schuylkill River, just northwest of Falls Bridge and West River Drive. Dumpers, apparently mostly contractors with zero regard for the laws or the fact that they were contaminating the city's watershed, had found the mostly unused site and started tossing massive loads of tires and construction debris there.

"It was slightly a no-man's land," Horowitz said. She said the trash pile began 20 feet from the river, but as it got larger, debris was starting to fall into the water, not far from two intake valves where Philadelphians' drinking water is piped in before going to treatment plants.

"As far as our drinking-water quality, I don't think it affected that" Horowitz said, but it's not something I, as a resident of Philadelphia, want to be close to our water intake."

Horowitz and Water Department staff worked with staff from Parks and Recreation, the Streets Department, and volunteers from United by Blue, a Philly-based clothing and accessories retailer that pledges to remove one pound of waste from waterways for each product sold (so far, their website claims to have removed 1,501,236 pounds of waste).

Over the course of four days at this site, the team took out enough material to fill more than 400 10-yard dumpsters — roughly equal to 32,700 households each dumping a 15-pound bag of garbage straight into the river, the Water Department said in a blog post. Over three days in late September, 227 tons of waste were removed. On Dec. 1, they reconvened and took out another 17.2 tons.

While some of the waste was unrecyclable trash, some can be reused. Recyclables like plastic bottles were removed, while fill and gravel recovered may be reused by the Streets Department for projects like street repair. The

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488 tires removed are set to be recycled by Bridgestone Tires. The city has also placed new access gates and new "No Dumping" signs in the area, which is being assessed for future reactivation and reuse.

"There's definitely a right and a wrong way of disposing of trash," Horowitz said. "Our job now is doing the best we can to be sure it stays clean, and let people know we're coming back here — it's not just a one-time cleanup."

"Our job now is doing the best we can to be sure it stays clean, and let people know we're coming back here — it's not just a one-time cleanup."
Maria Horowitz, environmental engineer

The Schuylkill River, the scenic waterway that shapes Philadelphia, has undergone tremendous changes in the past century and a half.

Severely polluted in the early 20th century by unchecked upstream industry, by the 1940s it was so filthy that barely a fish could be found in its waters. But the government undertook a massive cleanup from 1947-1951 and instituted new environmental regulations, changing the river's fortunes dramatically. In past decades it has become an environmental success story, with fish and plant life gradually regenerating. While it has not yet reached its pre-colonial level of "waters of uncommon purity," it remains a clear example of how a waterway can heal and regenerate itself when pollution is curbed.

And the maintenance continues to keep the Schuylkill clean. From July 2017 to June 2018, the Water Department estimated its Waterways Restoration Team removed a total of 3.2 million pounds of trash and debris from local creeks, rivers and riverbanks.

In 2018 alone, the Philadelphia Water Department and United by Blue have worked on 12 cleanups — one of which was above Falls Bridge — and removed a total of 422,324 pounds of garbage, they said.

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The old Provident Mutual Life Insurance Building, vacant since 1983 but refurbished by the city at a price of $50 million.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Future uncertain for West Philly building fixed up by city

Mayor, City Council at odds over proposed development of historic West Philly property.

SAM NEWHOUSE
sam.newhouse@metro.us

A 90-year-old relic of Philadelphia's past, the Provident Mutual Insurance Building at 46th and Market streets has been described as a "Neoclassical palace." But after more than $50 million in taxpayer funds to restore the building, today it remains in the same state it has been for the past 35 years: vacant.

A plan to sell the aged property at 4601 Market Street for $10 million was stalled on Thursday by City Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell — earning her criticism from Mayor Jim Kenney, who said he was "extremely disappointed" with her choice and accused her of leaving "a hulking eyesore of a building, vacant and unused, in the heart of her district."

"Well, I'm disappointed in him," Blackwell shot back, stating that her constituents in West Philadelphia were skeptical about all the promised benefits of 4601 Market St.

Iron Stone Development and its partners had proposed a $70 million behavioral health and community services campus project at this site on a hill, with potential tenants ranging from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia to UPenn Health Services to the YMCA.

"It is unfortunate for her own constituents, because it would have brought health care for adults, children and families to West Philadelphia," Kenney said in a statement after City Council's last session of 2018 on Dec. 13, when Blackwell delayed a bill that would have transferred the property to Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC), allowing it to be sold. Kenney listed benefits like a workforce development program, summer youth programming, an early childhood education center, a family fitness center, a community garden and community meeting space, and hundreds of jobs. "Now, all of that evaporates, and leaves the community only with what it has had for many years — a vacant building," he said.

But Blackwell responded she was happy to work with the mayor and be a "team player," and had expedited legislation to move the Iron Stone proposal forward. What changed her mind was a community meeting at which some 250 of her constituents expressed skepticism of the purported benefits and unanimous opposition to the project, she said.

According to Kenney's office, the development would have brought 300 jobs in its first phase, then another 650 in construction, 60 percent of which would have gone to the local residents, half to minorities, and one-quarter to "minority-, women- or disadvantaged-owned firms." Ultimately, the mayor's office said it would lead to 2,500 permanent jobs in the community.

But at the community meeting, details were too sparse, Blackwell told Metro, specifically regarding the details of those promised jobs.

"I told them [Iron Stone] we would have a community meeting, they would need to explain things to the community, because that's

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD
PHILADELPHIA HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) is providing an opportunity for public review and comment on proposed revisions to the Public Housing Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) and the Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Plan (Administrative Plan). The two documents and summaries of proposed changes are available for public review and downloading on PHA's website at www.pha.phila.gov under the "Latest News" section or may be picked up at the following locations:

Scattered Sites Management Offices:

Abbottsford Homes – 3226 McMichael Street Wilson Park – 2500 Jackson Street
Westpark Apartments – 4445 Holden Street Fairhill Apartments – 2411 N. 11th Street
Spring Garden Apartments – 715 Brandywine Street

Public Housing Management Offices:
Bartram - 5404 Gibson Drive
Raymond Rosen – 2301 W. Edgely Street

PHA will conduct a Public Hearing on the proposed revisions to the ACOP and Administrative Plan. PHA public housing residents, Housing Choice Voucher Program participants and the general public are invited to attend and provide comments at the Hearing and/or to submit written comments during the public comment period. The Public Hearing is scheduled for the following time and location:

December 18, 2018 at 12 noon
2013 Ridge Ave., 1st floor
Philadelphia, PA 19121

The public comment period begins on **Wednesday December 5, 2018** at 12:00 noon and ends on **Friday, January 4, 2019** at 12:00 noon. All comments must be received at PHA's office by the end of the comment period. Please send written comments to:

Philadelphia Housing Authority
Office of the General Counsel
Attention: ACOP and Administrative Plan Comments
1505 N. 24th street
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The Public Hearing is being held in an accessible location. Persons who require assistance, sign language interpreter or other accommodations should call 215-684-5767 in advance of the Public Hearing. Please use the AT&T Relay Service for TTY.

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the bottom line. They came unprepared," Blackwell said. "You can't say how money was spent, how much, what the jobs are, how many there are, how much they will pay, what the project really is — all the normal, natural information that people expect." (Iron Stone could not immediately be reached for comment.)

The project has been derided widely for the $52 million investment in the property's renovations compared to its $10 million price tag — but Kenney said in his statement that in the long-term, with this proposal, property taxes and business receipt taxes would have netted the city an estimated $158 million over the next 20 years, which he called a $40 million profit.

Disagreements and disappointments or no, Blackwell said she does not see the story completely over for this site — she wants to call another community meeting about the proposal soon.

"It's a wonderful location," she said. "I think one way or another, the property will be salvaged."

The property in question came to the public's attention after former Mayor Michael Nutter's administration bought it in 2014 to become the future home of the Philadelphia Police Department, currently based in the aged Roundhouse at 8th and Race streets, which was built in the early '60s in an architectural style known as Brutalist.

That plan was ditched after Nutter left office, and in 2017, plans were announced for the PPD to instead move into the Inquirer's office in the clock-bedecked building at 400 North Broad St., leaving 4601 Market available for private bidders.

$288M

The Inquirer building project is estimated to cost $288 million; police officers are optimistically projected to be able to move in by Spring 2020.

The city plans to use 400 North Broad, with 100,000 more square feet than Provident Mutual, for more than just police headquarters. They say it could also offer new homes for the 6th and 9th police districts; the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, currently located in University City; and fire and emergency communications units. Those offices' former properties are expected to turn a profit by being sold off.

The Inquirer building project is estimated to cost $288 million, and police officers are optimistically projected to be able to move in by Spring 2020.

BRIEF

Trump hails judge's ruling against Obamacare as 'great'

President Donald Trump on Saturday hailed a court decision against Obamacare as "a great ruling for our country," while a U.S. government official said the decision by a Texas judge would have no immediate impact on health coverage.

U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor in Fort Worth, Texas, on Friday said that Obamacare, known formally as the 2010 Affordable Care Act (ACA), was unconstitutional based on its mandate requiring that people buy health insurance.

In a decision that could reach the U.S. Supreme Court, O'Connor sided with a coalition of 20 states that argued requiring people to pay for insurance coverage is illegal because a change in tax law last year eliminated a penalty for not having health insurance.

"It's a great ruling for our country. We will be able to get great health care. We will sit down with the Democrats if the Supreme Court upholds," Trump told reporters during a visit to Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia on a rainy Saturday.

Trump offered no details on the potential for health care talks with the Democrats, who are poised to take majority control of the U.S. House of Representatives in early January. The Senate will remain in Republican hands.

O'Connor's decision was issued the day before the end of a 45-day sign-up period for 2019 health coverage under the law.

The head of the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which oversees the Affordable Care Act, said there were no changes and exchanges were open for business. REUTERS

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Philly gets its turn at the sports book market

New Jersey sports book bettors wagered $1 billion in 2018. SugarHouse hopes to cut into that.

A.D. AMOROSI
letters@metro.us

Atlantic City's Ocean Resort Casino

COURTESY OF OCEAN RESORT CASINO

Philadelphia got its first dose of sports book betting Thursday, when SugarHouse became the first area casino to launch its sports book and accept wagers during a 48-hour, soft opening supervised by the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board. By Saturday, SugarHouse was in business, officially, as the PGCB gave the Delaware Avenue casino the thumbs-up.

Now, Philly and the rest of the state can start cutting into New Jersey's sports book, which has had a near-six-month jump on this state's first casino (Penn National's Hollywood Casino/Racetrack) to legally welcome sports wagering.

Right now, however, the Garden State has much to crow about. Wagers at New Jersey's online and retail sport books rose 27 percent in November (after a limp October) to hit the $330.7 million mark, and — in fewer than six months since their legalization in N.J. — have pulled in $928.1 million and counting, according to analysts for PlayNJ.com.

"We've been following this long before the federal sports betting ban went down earlier this year, so we have perspective on how it is and how it will go," said Dustin Gouker, an area native and head sports betting analyst for PlayNJ.com. "Jersey's on the upswing to become the United States' largest legal sports betting market, beyond even Las Vegas."

Credit online sports betting for Jersey beating such an audacious path to Nevada, as a preponderance of all bets in New Jersey involve sports and mobile wagering, and cut a swatch for every state considering legalizing and regulating sports betting.

There is no simple formula for how and what will succeed and not succeed when it comes to the sports book. That's why they call it gambling. But what Gouker can point out is that while the October handle in Nevada, the nation's largest legal sports betting market, was $528 million, a baby market in New Jersey was banging at its door with that aforementioned $300-plus million.

"Blame the busiest months of football, as well as the beginning action of the NHL, NBA, and college football seasons," said Gouker. "New Jersey is growing faster than Nevada as the ability to get onto mobile gaming is different. In Nevada, you actually have to go to a sports book location and sign up for a mobile account, and fund your account that way. In Jersey, you can do it from the comfort of your home, or on the phone. If you're someone who wants to bet on an online sports book in New Jersey, there are hoops like geolocation and customer verification. But, overall barriers to sign up are considerably lower in Jersey than in Nevada."

Gouker and the PlayNJ team also noted that DraftKings Sportsbook (which holds the cards in nearly all of Resorts AC's online revenue) remains the online market leader, with $7.2 million in online gross revenue, up 41 percent from $5.1 million in October. FanDuel Sportsbook at The Meadowlands remained the market leader among retail sports books, posting $2.6 million in November gross revenue, up 165 percent from $1.1 million in October.

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Hondurans who fled political violence fear for lives if sent home

Political violence and poverty in Honduras have created a humanitarian crisis.

GETTY IMAGES

The Pineda family trudged northward for more than a month with a caravan of Central American migrants who are now stuck at the U.S. border. But they were on the run in Honduras much longer than that due to fears of political persecution.

According to the family's account, masked men in military uniforms came in November 2017 to their door in the town of Peña Blanca, brandishing handguns and giving them two options: leave or be killed. They chose to leave, taking refuge with friends and family for nearly a year, they said, before joining thousands of others in a 2,800-mile journey to the United States in October.

The confrontation occurred on Nov. 26, 2017, the night of Honduras' presidential election. Active in the leftist opposition Libre Party, the Pinedas believe their tormentors were loyal to conservative President Juan Orlando Hernandez.

His security forces killed at least 16 people in major street protests that followed his disputed re-election and nobody has been criminally charged, according to a U.N. report.

"They told me that for getting people involved in political parties they were going to fill me with lead," said Secundina Pineda, 25, one of four sisters living with their 65-year-old father and a toddler inside a tent at a migrant camp in Tijuana, Mexico.

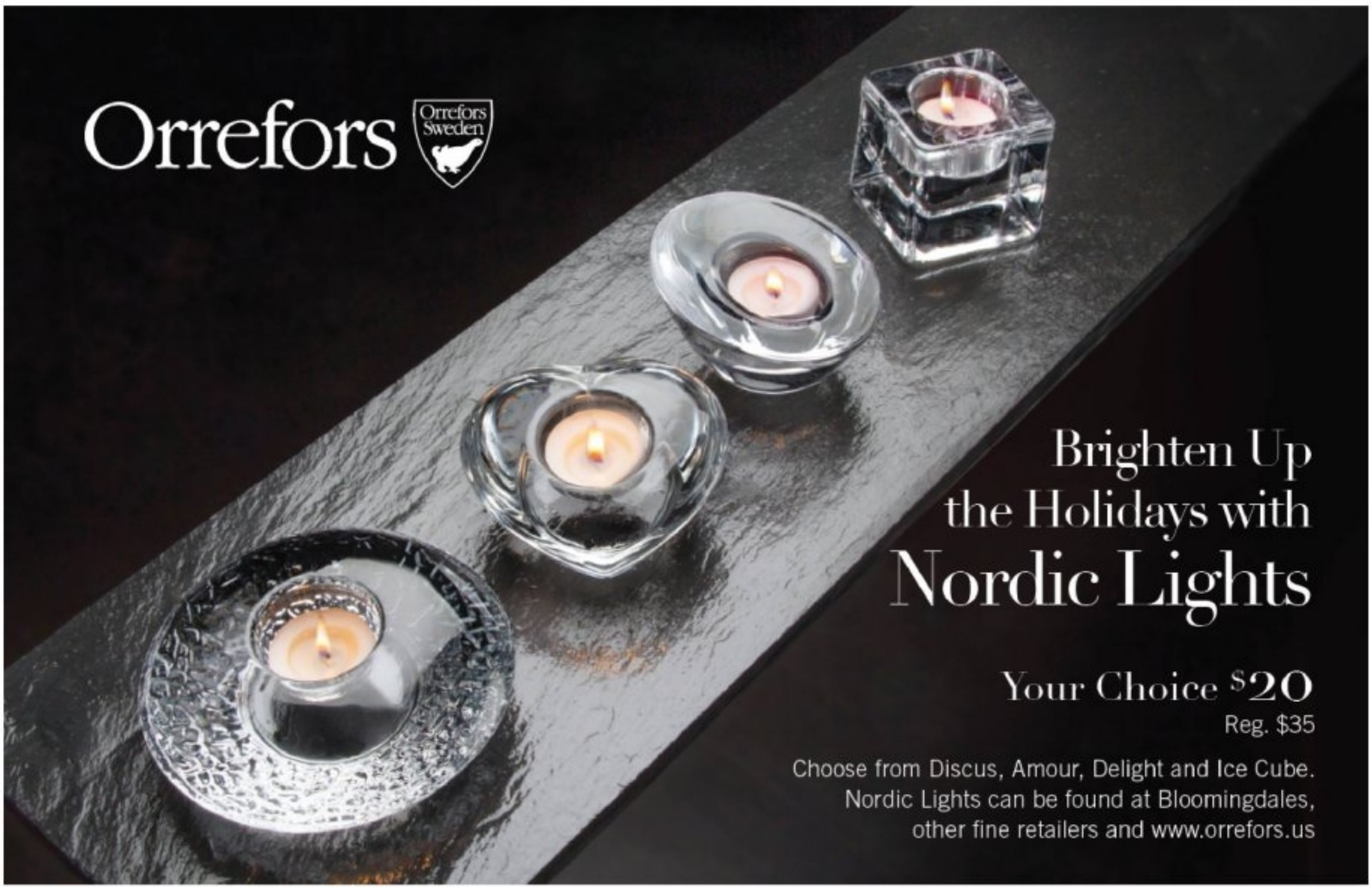
Their story points to the largely overlooked political violence in Honduras that, along with grinding poverty, has helped create a humanitarian crisis at the U.S. doorstep.

Reuters could not verify the Pinedas' story, which was largely narrated by Secundina. She is the most educated of her family, having studied business administration. A Honduran armed forces spokesman vehemently denied the account or any other political persecution.

But human rights observers in Honduras and immigration lawyers representing migrants from the caravan said they have heard similar stories of security forces entering homes and intimidating opposition political activists.

Military police have conducted arbitrary searches and seizures and broken up opposition demonstrations, the rights observers said, a contention denied by the military.

In a country with one of the highest murder rates in the world, death squads have conducted 38 massacres of five or more people in 2018, said Berta Oliva, director of the human rights group Committee of the Relatives of the Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH). She contended that political cases are written off as common crime. REUTERS



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An exhibitor sells marijuana-related paraphernalia during the Cannabis Expo in Pretoria, South Africa.

GETTY IMAGES

In an African first, a cannabis expo ... without cannabis

"It's like we came to a party and there's no music."

Andre Kruger's stand at Africa's first-ever cannabis exposition displayed an indoor growing tent, complete with state-of-the-art lighting imported from the United States and fittings for a high-tech hydroponic irrigation system.

What it didn't have, however, was a cannabis plant.

The four-day expo, which opened in South Africa's capital of Pretoria on Thursday, was a stark illustration of the legal gray area the nascent industry occupies in the continent's most developed economy.

In September, the Constitutional Court decriminalized the use and cultivation of cannabis in private space. But the decision did not legalize its trade or distribution. Even displaying cannabis in public remains legally dubious.

So exhibitors at the expo got creative. Kruger, whose company Sombrero Hydroponics has seen a spike in customer inquiries since September, used two artificial poinsettias as stand-ins.

"People just feel more comfortable now, because they don't have this added thought in the back of their mind thinking, 'What if the cops stop at my house?'" he said. "They're coming out of the closet — in this case, the tent."

Hundreds of expo-goers bought tickets and were already queuing before the event opened, but not everyone agreed with the ground rules.

Cannabis activist Steven Thapelo Khundu handed out cannabis buds from a plastic bag at the expo entrance, encouraging attendees to bring them inside.

"Free Ganga Free! Free Ganga Free!" he shouted as security forcibly removed him.

Under the court decision, lawmakers have two years to amend the country's cannabis laws, but the industry isn't waiting.

South Africa recently established a legal framework for licensing growers. The local unit of Canada's Canopy Growth, which in August received a $4 billion investment pledge from Corona beer maker Constellation Brands, is among the early applicants.

"I don't think most people realize just how big the cannabis industry is in South Africa already," said the Cannabis Expo's co-founder Silas Howarth.

International companies are, for now at least, seeking licenses to produce cannabis for export. But Gerhard Naude, the founder of health care company Go Life International, believes a fully legal domestic industry is now only a matter of time.

"I think there will be a few licenses awarded, and very closely regulated. I think in two years we'll definitely have a license, for the use of medicinal cannabis in any case," he said.

Itumeleng Tau, who said he's been growing marijuana for around 20 years, is among a wave of underground cannabis entrepreneurs who are hoping the pending legal changes will allow them to bring their businesses out of the shadows.

The expo was an important first step, he said. But the absence of any actual cannabis was strange.

"It's something very, very wrong ... It's like we came to a party but there's no music." REUTERS

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Wouldn't it be so much more considerate to drive to or park your auto at the many nearby store parking spots to conduct your post-fill up shopping and leave the gas pump area available for others? This is especially inconsiderate during rush hour, when gas sales peak! Don't you consider the time your vehicle takes up space at the pump, while you search, order food, wait for an order or stand in checkout lines?

— **Dominic Marucci**, *Metro Philly reader*

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Here is Lola in her Christmas bow. She's an 11-year-old Coton de Tulear and she is sooo cute!

Submitted by **Judith Lebzelter**, *Metro US reader*

Please remember to send your Humbles to **humble@metro.us**. These submissions can be acts of gratitude, positivity or kindness that you have seen throughout the day.

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Enthusiasm is great, as long as you don't let your emotions mess things up. Whatever you say or do, have a strategy in place and a goal in mind.

Taurus Much can be accomplished if you go about it the right way. Lay out a plan, recruit people who have something to offer and put your best foot forward.

Gemini Keep things in perspective. It will be easy for you or someone you are dealing with to stretch the truth or offer a false assessment of a time-sensitive job.

Cancer Personal growth and change are highlighted. Put some energy behind your strategies for better health, happier relationships and creative ideas.

Leo Not everyone will be happy with the changes you make, but the ones who are will support and help you get things done. An emotional change will be a wakeup call.

Virgo Do what you can to help those less fortunate. Don't let someone's extravagance or indulgent behavior get in your way. Choose your path and do what's right and best for you.

Libra Learn from someone else's experience. Get together with friends or family. Consider making a change that will improve your life. Don't tolerate someone who is constantly putting you down.

Scorpio Reach out to people who share your beliefs or are heading in a similar direction as you and make arrangements to collaborate. Getting a different point of view will stimulate your imagination.

Sagittarius Fix up your space or spend time with loved ones. Being a homebody will bring out the best in you and help you prepare for upcoming festivities. Nurture others and pamper yourself.

Capricorn Getting along with some people will not be easy. Don't let emotions take charge or opinions lead to arguments. In the spirit of the season offer help, not hindrance.

Aquarius Take care of details at work and address issues you may have about your job or someone else's. Making innovative suggestions in a positive manner will encourage others to try harder.

Pisces Be careful not to upset someone in charge. An act of benevolence will help you overcome someone's critical point of view. A personal or physical change is encouraged. Avoid negative people. EUGENIA LAST

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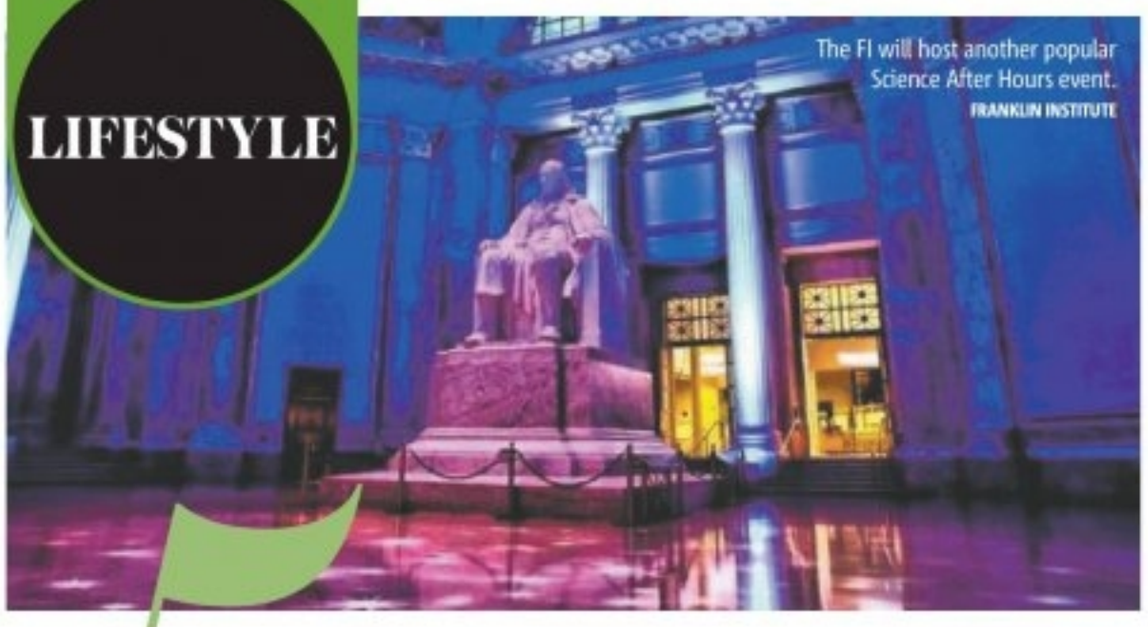
The FI will host another popular Science After Hours event.
FRANKLIN INSTITUTE

5 Fun things to do in Philly this week

Explore the Franklin Institute after hours, build your own bonsai tree and more

MOLLY GIVEN
Molly.Given@metro.us

Looking for some fun and unique things to do in Philly this week? We've got you covered.

Zahav & WHYY Dinner and a Movie
For years, Zahav has hosted "A Very Jewish Christmas," a dinner and classic movie event featuring a different cultural cuisine. This year highlights Chinese take-out that will be served alongside delicious cocktails, then at 7 p.m., a classic movie will be shown. This year is extra special because proceeds from the event will support Broad Street Ministry as well as WHYY programs.
Dec. 18, 6:30 p.m.-9 p.m., WHYY., 150 N 6th St., $79,

Science After Hours: Holiday Bizarre
The Franklin Institute is hosting another Science After Hours event, this time highlighting bizarre science that includes Twisted Tinkering ornament making, odd museum items, photo ops with Krampus, strange specimens, Winter Solstice stellar observing and more. The 21+ event will also be decked out for the holidays with twinkling lights, festive music, tasty treats and adult refreshments. Tickets are required.
Dec. 18, 7 p.m.- 10 p.m., Franklin Institute, 222 N 20th St., $15-$20, fi.edu

R&B Holiday Benefit Concert
Join in for this fun and Philanthropic event featuring talented R&B artists all with Philly ties. Guests will hear songs from the emerging artist's repertoire as well as plenty of festive holiday hits. This year's concert will directly benefit families being supported by the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House, with concert proceeds raised for this event going to both of its city locations.
Dec. 20, 7 p.m., Trocadero Theatre, 1003 Arch St.,$12-$15, thetroc.com

Holiday Vegan Drinks
The Humane League of Philadelphia and Tattooed Mom is hosting this fun and animal-friendly event for all vegans, vegetarians and anyone who is simply curious about tasty plant-based refreshments. While there, be sure to check out Tattooed Mom's delicious treats including a Vegan Pickle Fried Chickn Sandwich, Vegan Chubbsteak Wrap, Veggie Corn Dog on a Stick and much more.
Dec. 17, 6 p.m.- 8 p.m., Tattooed Mom, 530 South St., tattooedmomphilly.com

GETTY IMAGES

Beer and Bonsai
Sip on some tasty brews from Love City Brewing while planting and shaping your own bonsai tree. Juniper, decorative rocks and a six-inch ceramic pot are all included in this creative and unique event. A beer flight will also be included for each bonsai-maker as well. The event is BYOF, meaning guests can bring their own snacks to munch on too.
Dec. 18, 7 p.m.- 8:30 p.m., Love City Brewing, 1023 Hamilton St., $57, lovecitybrewing.com

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Why 'Bird Box' isn't Netflix's version of 'A Quiet Place'

Director Susanne Bier explains why "they are two very, very different movies."

GREGORY WAKEMAN
Gregory.Wakeman@metro.us

It was long before "Bird Box" when Oscar winner Sandra Bullock and acclaimed Danish director Susanne Bier started to search for a project to work on together.

But when they first read Eric Heisserer's adaptation of Josh Malerman's book around five years ago, they both had no interest in collaborating on it.

However, when they returned to the script last year, the social and political climate had altered so much that "Bird Box"— which revolves around Bullock's Malorie and two children trekking through a forest and down a river blindfolded in order to avoid the supernatural catastrophe has caused its victims to see their worst fears and commit suicide — suddenly felt extremely relevant.

"There is a current tone that feels way more relevant to today rather than when the book came out," Bier tells Metro. "I immediately thought that this could be interesting."

Bier also was attracted to "Bird Box" because she recognized the opportunity to create a contemporary and seldom seen heroine with Bullock's Malorie.

"I saw something with her part. The chance to do something I hadn't done before. Both dealing with a post apocalyptic world. But also addressing a kind of contemporary heroine. One that is very unconventional," says Bier. "Malorie in the beginning of the movie is a pregnant woman that is enclosed and doesn't want to let people into her life. But throughout the course of the film enough stuff and crazy things happen to her that she becomes more and more in charge of her motherhood."

Bier and Bullock talked repeatedly about what they wanted to explore and see with the character of Malorie, especially when it came to testing and pushing viewers with her uncompromising and tough treatment of the children.

"She is wary, she is

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Sarah Paulson and Susanne Bier on the set of "Bird Box." ALL PHOTOS NETFLIX

Sandra Bullock stars in Netflix's post-apocalyptic thriller.

harsh, she is brutal, and sometimes when you see her you might think she's being too stern. But she is doing it to the protect those kids and ensure their survival," says Bier. "I found that really interesting, that the film would show that side of motherhood that is so rarely seen. The forcefulness of the mother to make sure their kids are going to survive. That determination and lack of compromise was really interesting."

The release of the "Bird Box" trailer back in October immediately led it to be compared to John Krasinski's "A Quiet Place," which revolves around monsters using sound to hunt humans, thus sign language is used by its characters throughout the mostly silent movie.

"I think 'A Quiet Place' is a really, really great film," insists Bier when I bring up these comparisons. "But a part of me thinks the reason that they do get compared is that they're both post-apocalyptic movies.

"They also both have two really strong female leads," she adds. "And there aren't that many films with female leads, so there tends to be an automatic thing with that. But really they are two very, very different movies."

"Bird Box" debuts Dec. 21 on Netflix.

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'Christmas Cookie Challenge' host shares his favorite holiday recipe

Bake up Eddie Jackson's toasted-coconut brownies for the holidays this year.

MATT JUUL
matthew.juul@metro.us

If you want to try something a bit different for your holiday celebration this year, try baking up a batch of Food Network star Eddie Jackson's delicious toasted-coconut brownies.

"I love making these toasted-coconut brownies during the holidays and the way my house smells when I make this recipe," the "Christmas Cookie Challenge" host tells Metro. "What's not to like about chocolate and coconuts?"

GETTY IMAGES

Ahead of Monday's finale, Jackson shares his recipe for the sweet holiday treat.

Ingredients

Brownies:
1 stick (8 tablespoons) unsalted butter, plus more for the baking dish
2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
3/4 cup loosely packed light brown sugar
3/4 cup granulated sugar
4 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon coconut extract
1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup sweetened coconut flakes
1/2 cup chopped skinned almonds, optional
1/4 teaspoon fine salt

Frosting:
1 cup sweetened coconut flakes
1 stick unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon coconut extract
2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted
2 to 3 tablespoons milk

Directions

• For the brownies: Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F.

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Line a 13-by-9-inch baking dish with parchment, overhanging the edges by about 2 inches. Coat the parchment lightly with butter.

• Melt the butter and chocolate chips together in a large heat-proof bowl set over simmering water, then remove from the heat.

• With an electric mixer on low speed, mix the sugars into the chocolate mixture, then beat in the eggs on medium speed, one at a time, until fully incorporated. Beat in the extracts.

• Mix in the flour on low speed until just combined. Fold in the coconut and nuts, if using, by hand. Fold in the salt.

• Spread the mixture into the prepared baking dish and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out almost clean, 35 to 45 minutes. Let cool completely on a rack before frosting.

• For the frosting: Meanwhile, spread the coconut flakes on a baking sheet and bake, stirring once or twice, until lightly toasted, 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool.

• Combine the butter and extracts in a large bowl and beat on medium-high until light, about 1 minute. Add the confectioners' sugar and beat on low until combined, then beat on high until light and fluffy, 1 to 2 minutes. Beat in the milk, 1 tablespoon at a time, until the frosting is easily spreadable.

• Use the parchment overhang to remove the brownies from the baking dish in one piece. Spread the frosting on the brownies and sprinkle with the toasted coconut. Cut into bars to serve. The brownies can be made up to a day ahead and refrigerated in the baking dish.

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PUBLIC STORAGE # 24232, 2700 Grant Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19114, (215) 490-9431 • Time: 11:00 AM

B0017 - Mitchell, Keith; B0069 - Harper, Tamika; C0149 - HARGROVE-MOORE, DANA; C0164 - Gentile, Samantha; D0181 - Ellis, Simmonia; D0228 - Nicholson, Betty; E0279 - Charlton, Shannon; E0325 - Coleman, James; E0331 - Gabriele, Joseph; F0345 - Gutierrez, Michael; F0405 - Rodriguez, Veronica; I0592 - Dewees, Colleen; I0608 - Hansford, Joshua; I0615 - Molletta, Tameeka; J0709 - Mendez, Nelida; J0729 - Morris, Oliver; J0741 - Walton, Shawnia; J0817 - Nelson, Sonya; K0928 - Thompson, Kiana; M1070 - Grosswald, Michael; N1129 - Gambone Jr, Michael; P017- Pizzichil, Jeremy

PUBLIC STORAGE # 21605, 3751 Bristol Pike, Bensalem, PA 19020, (215) 309-8353 • Time: 12:00 PM

B046 - Daley, Matthew; B141 - McClean, Robin; B184 - Riggleman, Lisa; B210 - Hilton, Tracy; B212 - Williams, Robert; B216 - Long, Ebony; B278 - Dawit, Frewoini; B292 - Newkirk, Dre; B344 - Korona, Robert; B351 - Keiter, Melissa; C023 - Crompton Jr, John; C125 - Pantoe, Thomas; C156 - Tregea, Patrick; C231 - Palmer, Shakeya

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#2102 Rachael Greever, Household Goods
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Purchases must be paid at the facility with Cash. All Purchases must be complete within 72 hours of the end of the online auction. A $100 cash cleaning deposit is required until all items in the unit are removed from the premises and verified by manager on duty. Sale subject to cancellation until the purchase is completed; company reserves the right to refuse any online bids.

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#0415 Sarah Laughlin, Household Goods, Boxes, Toys • #0431 Maria Beltran, Household Goods, Boxes, Toys, Suitcases, Tools, Appliances
#1613 Eunica Brown, Household Goods, Furniture, Boxes, Sporting Goods, Appliances, Tools • #2213 Nicole Willits, Furniture, Boxes, Bags
#2310 Stanley Simon, Household Goods, Boxes • #2908 Cesar Beltran, Furniture, Boxes

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#2584 Jessica Reses, Household Goods, Boxes, Furniture, Suitcases, Appliances • #0318 Daniel Geiger, Furniture, Boxes, Suitcases, Toys, Chest #3401 Willards Bailey-Whitaker, Household Good, Furniture, Boxes, Trunks, Suitcases Toys, Appliances, Tools • #2506 Robyn Brown, Household Goods, Furniture, Boxes, Suitcases • #4001 Jonathan Cooper, Household Goods, Furniture, Boxes, T.V. • #3602 Roy Johnson, Household Goods, Furniture, Boxes, Trunks, Suitcases • #4419 Andrea Gutierrez, Bins, Boxes, T.V., Bookshelves, Table and Chairs, VHS Tapes, Printer #4703 Qiana West, Bags, Mattress, T.V.'s • #3118 Saleena Harris, Bags, Mattress, Boxes, Sofa, Bunk Beds

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#1237 JoAnn Ryan, Household Goods, Boxes, Files • #2415 Craig Hall, Household Goods, Appliances
#3316 Carmela Ellerbe, Household Goods, Boxes, Trunks, Appliances

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like a soft landing. But watch out: Although forbearance is undeniably quick and easy to set up, its high costs can leave you hurting.

A NerdWallet survey, conducted online by The Harris Poll, found that two-thirds of Americans (66%) don't know that interest continues to accrue at the regular rate when federal student loans are in forbearance. That interest adds up fast: NerdWallet's analysis shows that if borrowers currently in forbearance kept their balance there for 12 months without making interest payments, they'd add an average of $2,199 in interest charges to their debt, assuming the current 5.05% fixed interest rate for direct subsidized and unsubsidized loans for undergraduates and a balance of $43,538. At the end of the forbearance period, those interest charges could drive up monthly payments, making a bad situation worse.

Forbearance might seem like an appealing option because it's simple to set up; putting loans into general forbearance can be done with just a phone call. In some cases, schools even recommend it to borrowers who are falling behind on payments. But often, it's not your best option. Here's what you can do instead.

Consider deferment for subsidized loans Forbearance has a lot in common with deferment: Both allow you to hit the brakes on student loan payments for a time. The main difference: Subsidized loans and Perkins loans don't accrue interest in deferment. (Unsubsidized loans do.)

For subsidized loans, or federal loans awarded based on financial need, "I would definitely recommend exhausting any deferment periods first," says Colleen Campbell, associate director of postsecondary education at the Center for American Progress, a public policy research organization. You'll need to meet eligibility requirements to get a deferment, though; that's not the case with forbearance, which you can often get for almost any reason.

Another benefit: If you qualify for deferment, you can keep that more flexible forbearance option in your back pocket, in case you're ever in a more pressing financial bind and need quick relief.

Low income? Try an income-driven repayment plan For borrowers who aren't making enough money to cover student loan payments, setting up an income-driven repayment plan could be a smart move. Consider the Revised Pay As You Earn plan, or REPAYE, which doesn't come with any income requirements. With this plan, which requires you to recertify your income and family size each year:

Your required payment will generally be 10% of your discretionary income. After you make payments for 20 or 25 years, your loan balance is forgiven. If your payments aren't large enough to cover your interest costs, all or part of the interest that accrues during that time will be paid for by the government. Eligible borrowers with no income, or very low income, won't have to make payments at all under REPAYE. But unlike with forbearance, they won't have to pay the full amount of interest that accrues while in this plan, and after 20 or 25 years of payments, their remaining balance will be forgiven (although they may have to pay income tax on the forgiven balance).

If you have private student loans, income-driven repayment plans aren't an option for you. However, you might be able to contact your lender and modify your payments. **CLAIRE TSOSIE**

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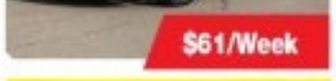
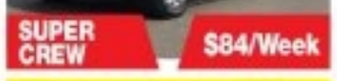


2015 TOYOTA RAV 4 XLE — $65/Week



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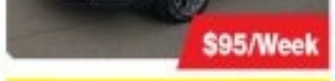

2015 MERCEDES CLA 250 — $68/Week

2015 JEEP RENEGADE — $65/Week

2015 INFINITI Q60 COUPE AWD — $89/Week

2014 JAGUAR XJ-L PORTFOLIO AWD — $99/Week

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2015 FORD TAURUS SEL AWD — $61/Week

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SPORTS

GETTY IMAGES

Taking stock of Flyers' GM upgrade options

If the Flyers decide to look for an upgrade within their system, they have a nice selection of choices.

ERIC GOLDSTEIN
sports@metro.us

Chuck Fletcher, the new general manager of the Philadelphia Flyers, is not expected to give the current roster much of a leash before he starts to make changes to it.

If the team can turn around its inconsistent season this month, then expect the locker room to remain intact. However, should the Flyers continue to sputter — they have three wins in their last 14 games — the GM will pull the trigger on a trade or two.

At his introductory press conference last week, Fletcher said that he will first look internally to improve the club, as he did this past week when he called up Phil Varone from the Lehigh Valley Phantoms of the American Hockey League (AHL) after Sean Couturier was listed as day-to-day with an upper-body injury.

So rather than look at possible trade scenarios, let's follow Fletcher's approach and see who his best internal options are this year (only players in the AHL are eligible to play for the Flyers) and next season.

THIS YEAR
1. CARTER HART

The 20-year-old goaltender is projected to get the keys to the No. 1 job with the Flyers but not anytime soon. Hart is still adjusting to his first season in the AHL and is clearly not ready for the jump.

Through 17 games with the Phantoms, he owns a less-than-stellar 3.05 goals-against average and .901 save percentage.

2. PHILIPPE MYERS

The 6-foot-5 defenseman has improved defensively (he is a plus-5 in plus/minus) and provided offense with five goals and 11 assists in 26 games. Myers is likely the first call-up if a Flyers D-man goes on the injured list, but with an already young and struggling defense to contend with, it's doubtful Fletcher remains with another pup on the blue line for any length of time this season.

3. MIKHAIL VOROBYOV

The center's stay in Philadelphia lasted the first seven games due to poor play after making the Flyers out of training camp. He's looked more like himself recently with the Phantoms and would add creativity, speed, skill and hopefully look more comfortable if called up again.

NEXT YEAR
1. SAM MORIN

The hulking, stay-at-home defenseman would have been on the former list but a lower-body injury will keep him from returning to the Phantoms until February. He nearly made the team last September and, if healthy, will enter next season as a top candidate to break camp with the Flyers.

2. MORGAN FROST

Following a campaign where he scored 42 goals and had 70 assists in 67 games last year with Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), the 2017 first-round pick is on pace to exceed those numbers this year with 20 goals and 38 assists through 32 games.

At 6 feet, 185 pounds, only his lack of size and strength held him back from possibly making the Flyers this fall.

3. ISAAC RATCLIFFE

At 6-foot-6, 200 pounds, size and strength are not one of Ratcliffe's shortcomings. Like Frost, Ratcliffe is expected to surpass last year's impressive numbers (41 goals, 27 assists in 67 games) this season (20 goals, 14 assists in 29 games) with the Guelph Storm of the OHL.

The 19-year-old will play for the Phantoms in 2019 and be a potential midseason option for the Flyers.

New Sex Cream Works Like Magic for Older Men

Recent warnings on sex drugs leads to the creation of an amazing no pill option; key ingredients activate spencial sensation pathways, enhancing erections and triggering arousal

Daniel Watson
Medical News Today

BOSTON – The medical community now has a safer and more effective alternative to sex pills, which they can immediately start offering to male patients. It will not require a prescription.

The alternative, called *Sensum*+®, is an amazing new sex cream that activates a sensation pathway on the penis known as TRPA1.

When applied as directed, it leads to incredible arousal and much more satisfying erections.

It also promotes powerful climaxes and ultimately results in significant improvements in performance.

"Men can expect outstanding sexual improvements with regular use. The penis will become hyper sensitive, making them easily aroused and excitable" explains Dr. Henry Esber, the Boston based scientist who introduced *Sensum*+® to market.

"And that's because *Sensum*+® does what no other sex pill or drug has done before – it stimulates a special sensory pathway right below the skin, which leads to phenomenal sensation."

Overtime, constant exposure (especially if circumcised) leads to decreased penis sensitivity, which can cause problems with arousal and erection quality. There just isn't enough feeling to get excited."

"Diabetes, anti-depressants and normal aging also leads to desensitization, a can make the situation even worse."

"This is what makes *Sensum*+® so effective and why the clinical studies and clinical use studies have been so positive."

MISDIAGNOSIS LEADS TO UNEEDED PRESCRIPTIONS

After years of clinical research and testing, Dr. Esber and his team have discovered an incredible compound that triggers arousal while helping men achieve erections more easily.

This compound isn't a drug. It's the active ingredient in *Sensum*+®.

And according to users, it produces sensational results. Many men report remarkable improvements in sexual performance and overall satisfaction.

They are more sexually active than they've been in years with the average *Sensum*+® user over the age of 50.

Clinical studies show *Sensum*+®'s key ingredient activates the TRPA1 sensation pathway right below the skin of the penis.

According to research, many men adults and seniors who suffer sexually have lost sensation in their penis due to constant rubbing and exposure and health related issues such as diabetes, hernia surgery, use of some anti-depressants, multiple sclerosis, and other type of illnesses.

This desensitization often makes sex extremely challenging. Without a 100% feeling in the penis, its next to impossible to get truly aroused.

Worse, modern day sex drugs have absolutely no effect on sensation and are laden with side effects. They simply stimulate an erection by enhancing blood flow.

It's why most men are rarely satisfied after taking them and why *Sensum*+® users are always stocking up on more and couldn't be happier.

"We knew the science behind *Sensum*+® was there, but we never expected results like we're seeing. It's far exceeded our expectations" said a spokesperson for the company.

A STAGGERING 80% IMPROVEMENT IN SENSATIVITY

Researchers have conducted several clinical studies on *Sensum*+® and the results from the most recent are undoubtedly the most impressive.

A data analysis of three clinical surveys of 370 men showed that an amazing 80% of *Sensum*+® users experienced dramatic improvements while using the cream and as a result were aroused easier and a phenomenal boost in performance.

Additionally, 77.4% of men also reported much more satisfying climaxes, making sex for both them and their partners nearly 300% more satisfying.

"I have full feeling and sensitivity back in my penis. Everything feels better. My erections are harder, I'm more easily aroused, I can finally climax again. This stuff honestly works like magic in the bedroom. I couldn't be happier at 66!" raves one *Sensum*+® user.

HOW SENSUM + ® WORKS

Sensum+® is a new sex cream for men that's to be applied twice a day for the first two weeks then just once every day after.

There are no harmful side effects for either the user or partner. It also does not require a prescription.

The active ingredient is an organic compound known as cinnamaldehyde with a patented combination of sexually rousing extracts.

Research shows that as men get older, they often lose sensitivity to the penis.

Although very subtle, this desensitization can significantly hinder sexual performance and lead to serious problems with becoming aroused and staying/getting hard.

The cinnamaldehyde in *Sensum*+® is one of the only known ingredients to activate a special sensation pathway on the penis called TRPA1. Once activated, it restores tremendous sensation to the penis, stimulating arousal and powerful erections.

NEW SEX CREAM MAY REPLACE POPULAR SEX PILLS: This new patented clinically proven arousal cream is now available nationwide.

This would explain why so many users are experiencing impressive results so quickly and why the distributors of *Sensum*+® offer their low cost cream with an amazing guarantee.

GUARANTEE DISCOUNTED SUPPLY TAKES RISK OFF CONSUMERS

A large percentage of men report life changing results with *Sensum*+®. That's why it is now being sold with an above-industry standard guarantee.

"We can only make this guarantee because we are 100% certain this cream works," says Esber.

"We want to take risk off the consumers. So besides offering massive discounts, we're also offering this guarantee, so they don't have to risk a cent."

Here's how it works: Use the cream exactly as directed and you must feel a significant improvement in sexual sensations. You must be more easily aroused with harder, longer lasting erections and be having the best sex you've had in years.

Otherwise, simply return the empty bottles. Then, the company will refund your money immediately.

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This is the official release of *Sensum*+®. As such, the company is offering a special discounted supply to any reader who calls within the next 48 hours.

A special hotline number and discounted pricing has been created for all Pennsylvania residents. Discounts will be available starting today at 6:00AM and will automatically be applied to all callers.

Your Toll-Free Hotline number is 1-800-881-1324 and will only be open for the next 48 hours. Only a limited discounted supply of *Sensum*+® is currently available in your region.

Consumers who miss out on our current product inventory will have to wait until more becomes available and that could take weeks. The company advises not to wait. Call 1-800-881-1324 today.

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Store Space, wishing to avail themselves of the provisions under the Self-Service Storage Facility Act., hereby gives notice of the sale under said act to wit; **Thursday the 27th day of December, 2018 at 10:00 AM**, on that day will conduct a public sale to the highest bidder, with bidding to take place on lockerfox.com, FOR CASH ONLY, the contents of spaces at Store Space - **Germantown, 335 E Price Street, Philadelphia, PA 19144.**

Martin, Lorraine E. 2169; Williams, Lisa 2340; Donaldson, Lawrence 1080; Robinson, Zakiyah S. 1192; Cheeves, Sheena M. 1233; Giles, Patricia 2045; Jordan, Rashida Unique 1288; Johnson, Richard 2112; Marcus, Eugene 2298; Jones Jr, Timothy 2204; Landers, Lanesha N. 1195

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Phillies interested in acquiring Mike Minor

The Phillies could look toward the trade market to find some pitching for next season.

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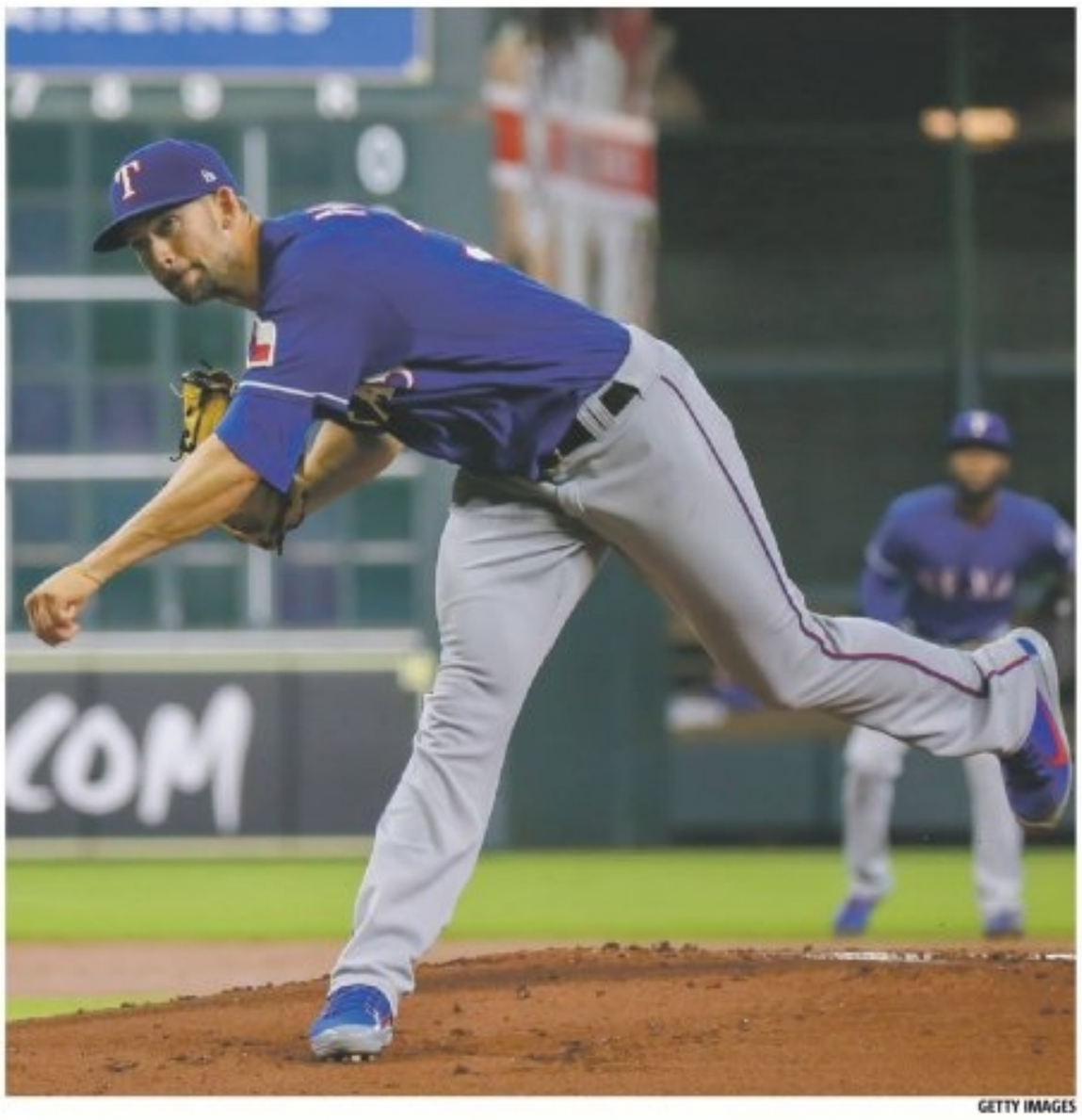

GETTY IMAGES

Could the Philadelphia Phillies be looking toward the trade market to find some pitching?

Well, according to one report, they are exploring that avenue. Scott Lauber of the Philadelphia Inquirer reported on Friday that the Phillies are pursuing a trade for Texas Rangers left-handed pitcher Mike Minor.

In addition to what Lauber reported, T.R. Sullivan of MLB.com mentioned on Saturday that the Rangers would be willing to part ways with Minor, but only if the Phillies were willing to give up "at least a couple" of their top pitching prospects.

During the trade deadline in July, the Phillies were not willing to trade their top pitching prospect, Sixto Sanchez, but did include Adonis Medina in a potential package for Manny Machado.

Nevertheless, if the Phillies do not have to give up those two guys in a possible trade for Minor, then they might have to consider going through it.

Through the first few weeks of free agency, Philadelphia has struck out when it comes to landing a free-agent starting pitcher. Southpaw Patrick Corbin signed a six-year, $140 million with the Washington Nationals, while veteran J.A. Happ reportedly decided to stay with the New York Yankees.

Therefore, the best left-handed starting pitching options out there left for the Phillies are Dallas Keuchel and Yusei Kikuchi. But if they do end up acquiring Minor, who was Texas' No. 1 starter this past season, he will not be a supreme upgrade in their starting rotation.

Last season with the Rangers, the 31-year-old starter posted a record of 12-8 with an ERA of 4.01, while racking up 132 strikeouts in 157 innings pitched. Minor signed a three-year deal last offseason with Texas, after coming over from the Kansas City Royals, where he was a relief pitcher.

He is owed $9.83 million next season and in 2020. Minor has been on the Phillies' radar for some time as according to Lauber, they tried to acquire him at the trade deadline.

Even if the Phillies do come away with Minor, they still need a relief pitcher.

Over the last week or so, it has been reported that the Phils are aggressively pursuing both free-agent relievers Andrew Miller and Zach Britton. Both players would be immediate upgrades to a Philadelphia bullpen that gave up 4.49 runs per game, which was higher than the National League average (4.34).

However, there are multiple teams in pursuit for those relievers, which means the price tag for both will be pretty high. If that is the case, then the Phillies might be inclined to go the trade route and call the San Francisco Giants.

According to Alex Pavlovic of NBC Sports Bay Area, the Giants have received a lot of calls centered around closer Will Smith. The 29-year-old left-handed reliever posted a career-best 2.55 ERA, 14 saves, with 71 strikeouts over 53 innings pitched.

Pavlovic also added that San Fran is looking for young outfielders and cost-controlled starting pitchers.

With that being known, the Phillies could offer the Giants either Odubel Herrera or Nick Williams, especially with the signing of veteran outfielder Andrew McCutchen. And when it comes to a cost-controlled starting pitcher, maybe the Phils dangle Zach Eflin out there again.

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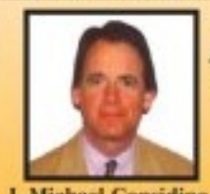

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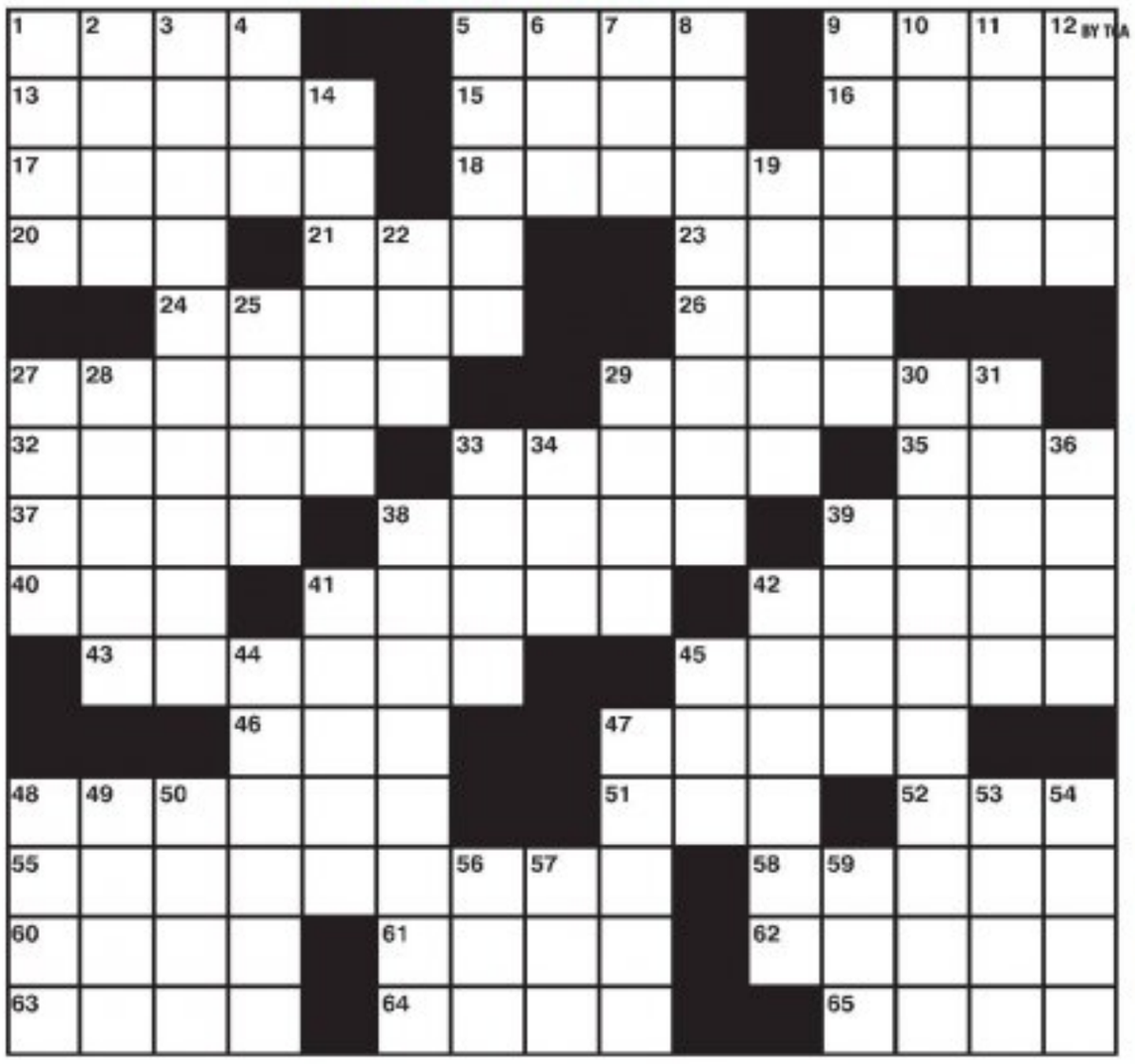

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1 __ into court; sue
5 Tree covering
9 __ around; go bargain-hunting
13 Landlord
15 "__ the Roof"; 1962 hit for The Drifters
16 Melody
17 Bart's mom
18 Law
20 Place for an iris
21 Endeavor
23 Giggle nervously
24 FBI wanted poster name
26 20th letter
27 State-of-the-art
29 __ basket; Yogi Bear's joy
32 Very angry
33 Polish
35 Cow's comment
37 Captures
38 Street talk
39 Spick-and-__; very clean
40 Queasy
41 Largest U.S. bank
42 On the __; unrestrained
43 Deodorant brand
45 Cuts of beef
46 Actor Linden
47 Couples
48 Take willingly
51 Is __ to; probably will
52 Knot-tying words
55 Attorney
58 Subsided
60 "Who Wants __ a Millionaire"
61 Defeat decisively
62 Reigned
63 Kill
64 Lively
65 Prescriptions, for short

DOWN

1 Residence
2 "__ in a Manger"
3 Like terrible handwriting
4 Table support
5 Life __; ring-shaped floats
6 Four months from now: abbr.
7 Singer Stewart
8 Making bootees
9 NY's __ Island
10 Actress Helen
11 "__ in Love With Amy"
12 Look through a keyhole
14 Accept one's pension
19 Charlotte, to Prince Harry
22 __ for office; campaigned
25 "Why don't we!"
27 Twiggy's skirt
28 Grad exams, often
29 Forest tree
30 Not doable
31 Seashore
33 Thin strip of wood
34 __-been; one no longer popular
36 Change for a five
38 Havens
39 Zoom skyward
41 Casino game
42 Dawdle
44 VP between Gore and Biden
45 Snoop Dogg's music
47 Shindig
48 Juggling __; multitasking situations
49 Weather forecast
50 Nation in the Caribbean
53 Action
54 Likelihood
56 Cut off
57 "__ Father, Who art in heaven..."
59 Tramp

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